



# SENATE WATCH

*A summary of today's Senate actions;  
published daily when the Senate is in session.*

3/27/03

## FINAL PASSAGE

### **SB 163 (Van Woerkom)**

#### AGRICULTURAL RENAISSANCE ZONES

The bill would allow the designation of additional agricultural renaissance zones. The bill would increase the cap on agricultural renaissance zones (from 10) to 20, and would remove the deadline for their designation.

3/26:

- *SB 163 was moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading. No amendments. Sen. Brater: This is a good program, but we need to look further at the bill, especially its possible fiscal impact on the state.*

3/27:

- **Brater 1 (1 amend) was defeated [RC 50: 16 yes, 22 no]. This would require the businesses in these renaissance zones to show a clear revenue source (to the state) before they could be given the tax break. Several Democrats spoke in support of this amendment: With serious budget deficits, we must ensure we are fiscally responsible.**
- **SB 163 passed [RC 51: 27 yes, 11 no (Dems)].**

### **SB 294 (Cherry)**

#### CELL PHONES IN SCHOOLS

The bill would permit the board of a school district to adopt and implement its own local policy concerning whether pupils could carry pocket pagers, electronic communication devices, or other personal communication devices in school, beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. Currently, school boards must prohibit pupils from carrying these devices, unless a board approves their use for health or other unusual reasons.

FOR: Because cell phones and pagers are a way of life for a significant number of people, their use is no longer a reliable indicator of illegal activity.

3/26:

- *Committee 1 (S-3) was adopted [no RC]. Sen. Cherry: The ban on cell phones is outdated and needs to be changed. Many students use their phones to communicate with their parents.*
- *SB 294 was moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading.*

3/27:

- SB 294 passed [RC 52: 38 yes, 0 no].